

THE WAAD WAVE

News and views of the Westchester Asian American Democrats



AAPI votes may swing the nation on November 5

Early voting starts on October 26, and the stakes have never been higher. The surprise ticket of Vice President Kamala Harris and Gov. Tim Walz has re-energized Democrats, giving democracy and the rule of law a whisker of a chance against barefaced authoritarianism and the whims of a spiteful felon. However, the odds are still terrifyingly even.

In 2020, 7.6 million AAPI voters turned out, including enough crucial votes in Georgia to bring victory to President Biden. In 2024, about 15 million Asian Americans are eligible to vote, a 15% increase from 2020. We have substantial and growing populations in swing states and AAPI registration in 2024 increased by 43% over 2020, the largest percentage increase of any racial group. Can AAPI be the margin of victory again?

Will this be the year the US elects our first Asian American president?

What can you do to help? Visit page 3 to find out.

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SEPT

Every weekend in Sept and October: sign up to canvass for House candidates in NY

<https://www.mobilize.us/nysdems/>

Sept 10, 6:30pm, Burke's Bar in Yonkers: WAAD Debate Watch party

Sept 15: New Castle Canvass for Mondaire Jones

Sept 21: Last day to apply for WAAD endorsements

Sept 22: Queens Canvass for Tom Suozzi

Sept 24: Mondaire fundraiser in Sleepy Hollow

Sept 29: Canvass with Shelley Mayer for Mondaire

Late Sept, TBD: postcard party in Hastings-on-Hudson

OCT

Oct 5: Canvass with Shelley for Pat Ryan

Oct 16, 7:30: General meeting (Zoom)

Oct 26: last day to register to vote in the Presidential election

Oct 26-Nov 3: Early voting in New York begins

NOV

Nov 5: Presidential election and WAAD watch party

DEC

Dec 4, 7pm: WAAD in person dinner

*Save the dates and email us at
westchesterasianamericandems@gmail.com
to RSVP or for more details*

OUR MISSION

Westchester Asian American Democrats (WAAD) launched in 2020 with the mission to engage and increase the fast-growing AAPI electorate in Westchester, as well as to:

- Act as a vehicle to disseminate Democratic party values and implement its policies in Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities throughout Westchester County;
- Provide a forum to address political concerns of the Westchester county AAPI community;
- Enhance the visibility of and empower Westchester's AAPI community;
- Promote voter education, participation, and representation of its members in different branches of government and the political process in Westchester county;
- Recruit, train, and support AAPI candidates to run for public office in Westchester.

WAAD 2023-4 OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE BOARD

Co-Chairs
Co-Vice Chairs
Treasurer
Co-Secretaries

Tony Kollarmalil, Heather Mieko Lackey
Bhavana Pahwa, David Imamura
Srinivasan Ramaswamy
Jeanhee Chung, Reena Agarwal

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Reena Agarwal
Vikas Agrawal
Anjali Thavendran Chen
Jeanhee Chung
Harmeet Goindi
Lisa Do Hofflich
Marjorie Hsu
David Imamura

Tony P Kollarmalil
Heather Mieko Lackey
Bhavana Pahwa
Srinivasan Ramaswamy
Kim Snyder
Kasama Star
Jeni Wallace

HOW TO TAKE ACTION

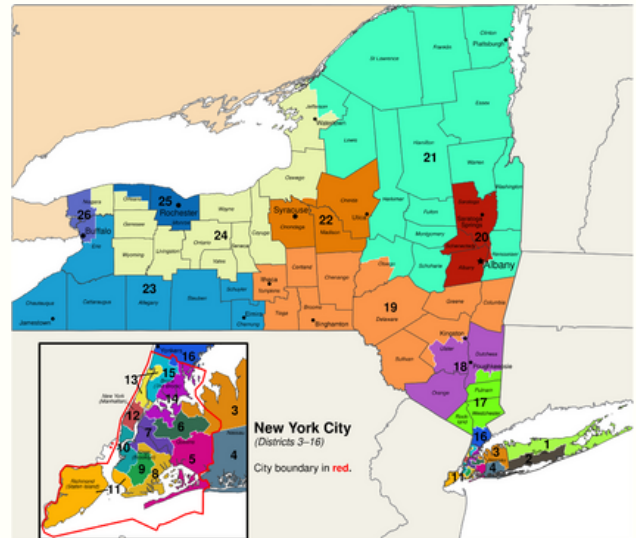
WE MUST TAKE BACK THE HOUSE

Without a Democratic House majority, a good president can't accomplish much; and a bad president can't do more damage. The path to win back Congress lies through New York, Westchester in particular. We sit at a crucial point between several of the closest House races in the nation, including District 17 in upper Westchester, several races in Long Island and upstate NY (see map).

The candidates and districts that need our help are:

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| CD17 Mondaire Jones | CD01 John Avlon |
| CD18 Pat Ryan | CD03 Tom Suozzi |
| CD19 Josh Riley | CD04 Laura Gillen |

Click on the links to visit their campaign websites and donate or volunteer.



WAAD is also organizing postcard parties, doorknocking events, fundraisers, and phonebanks for some of these candidates. We invite you to join us! The dates of some of our events are on page 2. For more details, just

email us at

westchesterasianamericandems@gmail.com

and say you'd like to volunteer.

MAKE CALLS AND KNOCK ON DOORS FOR KAMALA

Sign up to make calls to AAPI eligible to vote in a swing state. If you speak an Asian language, even better! According to Sister District, the following states are critical:

- *Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin—presidential swing states that also include additional target federal or state-level races.*
- *Montana and Ohio— are states key to a U.S. Senate majority.*
- *California and New York—states key to a U.S. House majority*

The number of AAPI eligible to vote in these states usually exceeds the margins needed to win! Attend a Zoom phonebank (with training) here: <https://events.democrats.org/event/671756/>

Sign up to canvass in PA: There are opportunities every weekend day (the earlier the better)

<https://bluewave2024.substack.com/p/a-list-of-how-to-volunteer-to-help>

USE YOUR NETWORKS

Friends and family who live in **swing districts**: Encourage them to hold Meet and Greets for local Democratic candidates, put up lawn signs, and invite candidates to local events.

Friends in **red districts**: Help them connect with other blue voters and [find local actions](#).

Friends in **safe blue districts**: Connect them with groups like [Indivisible](#), [Swing Left](#), or [Sister District](#) to write postcards, make donations, travel to canvass, register voters, and network to win over MAGA Republicans up and down the ballot.



WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE AAPI CURRICULUM BILL

Senate Bill S5963A, which requires the Commissioner of Education to establish AANHPI history and civic impact curriculum or instructions for school districts, cleared the Senate in the 2023-24 legislative session!

Thank you to State Senator John C. Liu for sponsoring the bill, and to our State Senators Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Shelley Mayer and Pete Harckham for their invaluable support! The Assembly version A6579A, sponsored by Assembly Member Grace Lee (D) and co-sponsored by Westchester Assembly Members Chris Burdick and Mary Jane Shimsky (thank you!), did not pass and remains in Committee. Both bills need to be re-introduced in the 2024-25 legislative session.

Advocacy groups are gearing up for an expanded push with New York state's growing AANHPI coalition. To join advocacy efforts and join the REACH Coalition (WAAD is a member) go [here](#).

Here's what you can do to support the bill:

- [Join the REACH coalition](#)
- Ask your local school parents, teachers, PTSA, school board, and superintendent to support the bill
- [Contact your assembly member](#)
- [Contact your state senator](#) ([click "Aye" on the bill](#))
- Contact the [governor](#)



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-CHAIRS

My mother was born at the Heart Mountain Internment Camp in Wyoming during WWII and that really shaped the lives of our entire family. It's really important to me to take an active part in our government so that the mistakes of the past are not repeated in the future.

2016 was a real wake up call for so many of us and since then, I have pledged to do more to fight for our future. Being part of WAAD and working along side so many like minded and passionate individuals has been truly amazing. I look forward to our continued energy and enthusiasm! -- Heather

WHY YOU SHOULD VOTE “YES” ON PROPOSITION 1

New York’s State Constitution currently includes protections for race and religion, but this amendment — [Prop 1](#) — would close those loopholes by prohibiting government discrimination based on a person’s ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, and sex—including LGBT, pregnancy, and abortion rights. Proposal 1 came about largely in response to state governments and courts across the country rolling back fundamental rights and banning abortions, and is supported by a large and growing NYS-wide [coalition](#). **Turn over the ballot and vote YES ON PROPOSITION 1.**

STOP ASIAN HATE

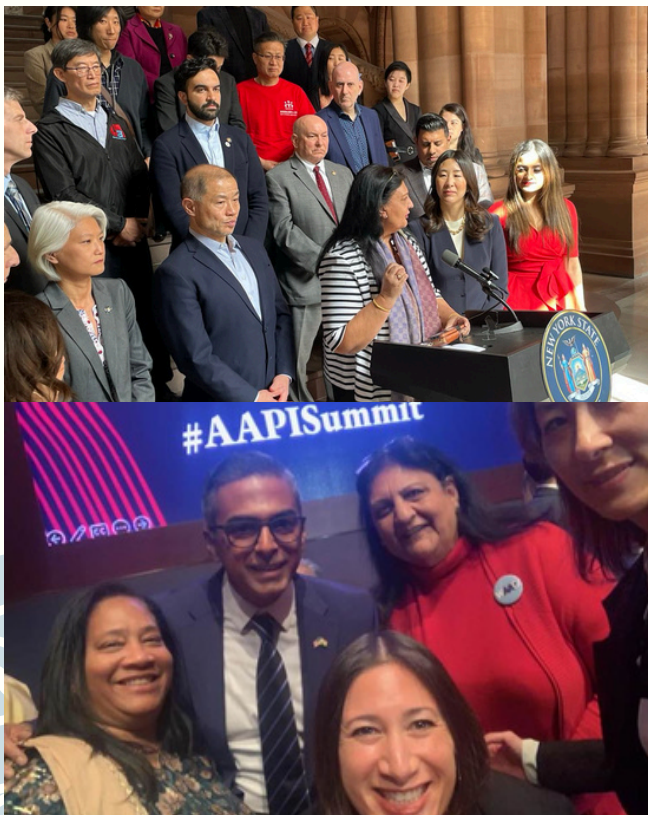
END DISCRIMINATION

STOP AAPI HATE

#FlipYourBallot this November
Vote for the New York State
EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT
#VoteYesOnProp1

EXPAND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION PROTECTIONS FOR
ETHNICITY, NATIONAL ORIGIN, AGE, GENDER,
DISABILITY, PREGNANCY STATUS

graphic by Carol Cao



AAPI Summit in Albany

The 1st Annual AAPI Summit of NY was held on May 9, 2024. The Summit, organized by the New York State Assembly Asian Pacific American Task Force, featured several workshops hosted by various elected officials. Assemblymember Chris Burdick hosted a panel, "Social Isolationism in the AAPI Community," which was put together with help from his Chief of Staff and WAAD Co-Chair Heather Mieko Lackey. WAAD was also well represented by WAAD vice chairs Dr. Bhavana Pahwa and Westchester County Legislator David Imamura. The event drew more than 300 Asian Americans from across New York State to discuss and advocate for solutions to various issues impacting our communities.

\$30 million from the State for New York’s AAPI communities!

After months of advocacy by the over 130 AAPI-led and -serving community-based organizations (including WAAD) that make up New York’s AAPI Equity Budget Coalition, the historic \$30 million of NY State funding to our AAPI communities was restored in the 2024-25 State Budget! For more celebrating this win, see CACF’s [press release](#) and event photo including Bhavana Pahwa, WAAD Vice Chair.

WAAD ENDORSEMENTS 2024

OUR PICKS IN WESTCHESTER FOR 2024



Every general election, the Westchester Asian American Democrats endorse local and national candidates. Our questionnaire for candidates may be found on our website or at [this link](#).

This November, we are proud to endorse the re-elections of [Shelley Mayer](#) for New York State Senator, District 37, [Nader Sayegh](#) for New York State Assembly, 90th District, and [Chris Burdick](#) for New York State Assembly, 93rd District.

These three candidates are staunch allies of Asian Americans in Westchester. We hope that you will support them if they are on your ballot!

Voting should be done early, and often! AAPI need to start voting in primaries and special elections. Don't "fall off" by voting only for the Presidential spot...Vote the lower positions, Democrat all the way!

We also released the following statement in July: *The Westchester Asian American Democrats (WAAD), the Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) caucus of the Westchester County Democratic Committee, endorsed **Vice President Kamala Harris** as the next Democratic nominee for President of the United States.*

In their unanimous endorsement, the WAAD executive committee stated:

"Kamala Harris has the experience, intelligence, and unwavering character that make her exceptionally qualified for the highest office. Her vision and values closely align with ours, earning our full support. We're ready to work together to elect our first AAPI president this November. We also extend our gratitude to President Joe Biden for his compassionate leadership during challenging times. We thank him for being a staunch ally of the AANHPI communities, and for his lifetime of dedicated service to our country."

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-CHAIRS

I had the opportunity of living in 3 countries until I started calling the United States home in 2007. The diversity of this country is what makes it stronger. No community is more diverse than Asian Americans. And representation matters so that our voices are heard in government.

WAAD's goal is to support all Democratic candidates running for office as we continue to advocate for matters affecting the Asian American community. We welcome you to join us and get involved.

--Tony



Our Year in Review

Congratulations to our co-Vice Chair David Imamura, who was elected the first Asian American legislator in Westchester County! Also congratulations to board member Vikas Agrawal, re-elected to Ardsley School Board!

Our small but mighty group canvassed in Queens to help win back Tom Suozzi's House seat in a special election, though he will still need to be re-elected this November. We celebrated Lunar New Year and Diwali. We tabled at the Westchester County Asian Heritage Festival, we endorsed and helped local Democratic candidates, attended Sen. Gillibrand's AAPI summit event in DC, spoke at the NYS Assembly's Asian Summit in Albany, wrote postcards, advocated for AAPI issues, and fought for human rights. We served and ate lots of yummy Asian food too. For our third year of existence, WAAD did well!





WAAD 2nd Annual Fundraiser

WAAD's second annual Spring fundraiser in May was a big success! **NYS Assembly Member Grace Lee** was our featured Special Guest, with many of our local elected officials, Democratic leaders, and judicial candidates also in attendance, including County Executive George Latimer, Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins, Senator Shelley Mayer, State Assembly Members Amy Paulin, Steve Otis, Nader Sayegh, Chris Burdick, and Dana Levenberg, County Legislators Terry Clements and our own David Imamura, and Westchester County Democratic Committee Chair Suzanne Berger. WAAD members enjoyed connecting in person with each other and with their local representatives over drinks and delicious Asian food (donated by O Mandarin and Bhavik). Thanks to WAAD Vice Chair Bhavana Pahwa for sharing with us her building's lovely rooftop!

JOIN WAAD TODAY

Become a member of Westchester Asian American Democrats by filling out our membership form below. We meet virtually every quarter. Annual membership dues are only \$50, free for student volunteers or with financial hardship. Make a difference!

